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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/US97/23740 (22) International Filing Date: 31 December 1997 (31.12.97) (30) Priority Data: 08/775,276 31 December 1996 (31.12.96) US (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): BUILD-NET, INC. [US/US]; Suite 214, 4815 Emperor Boulevard, Durham, NC 27703 (US). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): BROWN, Keith, T. [US/US]; 1409 Pinecrest Road, Durham, NC 27705 (US). BROWN, Philip, B. [US/US]; 4126 Wallingford Place, Durham, NC 27707 (US). WADDELL, J., William [US/US]; 3517 Westglen Road, Durham, NC 27705 (US). ANDRE, Jeffrey, J. [US/US]; 11312 Old Creedmoor Road, Raleigh, NC 27613 (US). (74) Agent: BODDIE, Needham, J., II; Myers, Bigel, Sibley, & Sajovec, L.L.P., P.O. Box 37428, Raleigh, NC 27627 (US).</p>		<p>(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).</p> <p>Published With international search report.</p>

(54) Title: SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR FACILITATING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN SEPARATE BUSINESS ENTITIES

(57) Abstract

Systems, methods, and computer program products synchronize product fabrication schedules with supplier schedules. A fabrication schedule is obtained from a fabricator data processing system, and supplier schedules are obtained from respective supplier data processing systems. Restrictive links are established between the fabrication schedule and the supplier schedules. Each restrictive link defines the supplier that will perform a work stage, and can also define the starting and ending times for both fabrication and supplier schedules. Float time preceding a selected activity starting time is assigned and utilized to absorb delays in completing activities preceding the selected activity. A computer based product catalog system automatically distributes and updates product information.

